

Confirmation from JEN that US options has been terminated, October 19, 2022

From: tomclements329@cs.com,

To: [JEN official]

Subject: Option to ship AVR spent fuel to US - formally terminated?

Date: Mon, Oct 17, 2022 12:29 pm

Hello Herr,

I have read in several German news articles and heard from contacts in Germany that the option to ship AVR spent fuel to the US DOE's Savannah River Site (here in South Carolina) has now officially been terminated. I have not yet seen this news in English.

I would appreciate a formal comment or statement from JEN (or another official entity) - in German is fine - about recent decisions concerning the status AVR spent fuel, especially concerning the US option now being off the table.

The South Carolina Nuclear Advisory Council meets next week - see agenda here:

https://www.admin.sc.gov/sites/default/files/real_property/GNAC%20Agenda%20Oct24%20FINAL.docx - and I would like to update them as to the status of this matter. In the past, they have had briefings on the issue from DOE but there has been no update to them for several years. (You will note that the director of the Savannah River National Lab, which has been cooperating with JEN, is to speak at the meeting.)

Many thanks for your response to my inquiry.

Sincerely,

Tom Clements

Director, Savannah River Site Watch

1112 Florence Street

Columbia, SC 29201

USA

<https://srswatch.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/SavannahRiverSiteWatch>

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Response from JEN official:

From:

To: tomclements329@cs.com,

Subject: AW: Option to ship AVR spent fuel to US - formally terminated?

Date: Wed, Oct 19, 2022 7:01 am

Dear Mr Clements,

Thank you for your e-mail regarding the recent decision concerning the AVR spent fuel.

The option to ship the aforementioned spent fuel has indeed been terminated by JEN. The reasons for this were as follows:

In 2014, the atomic supervisory authority ordered that the interim storage facility in Julich, where the spent AVR fuel is stored, be emptied without further delay. Since that time the shipment of the fuel to the U.S. was pursued as one of three options to implement the order.

As a beneficiary of the federal government (BMBF) and the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), JEN receives grants from the federal and state budgets. With the combined impact of the Covid pandemic and the Ukrainian crisis, the public budget has become more strained, which caused the competent budget commission to request that JEN re-evaluate the three options to empty the Julich storage facility and to reduce the costs of these accordingly. Therefore, the options were examined once more regarding their feasibility and timeframe for implementation. The result is that the probability of realization of the U.S.-option is currently the lowest. There was a stage of the U.S. project where the schedule showed it to be amongst the most favourable and that it would empty the storage facility the fastest. However, this is not the case anymore due to the current developments regarding the other two options.

Additionally the supervisory authority directed JEN to obtain a renewed license for the existing interim storage facility. According to recent information from the licensing authority, such a license may be issued in the near future. If this were to occur the German Atomic Energy Act would prohibit a subsequent export of the spent fuel, since spent fuel stored in a licensed facility may not be exported under current legislation.

Furthermore, the new NRW government's coalition agreement provides for the minimization of transports of radioactive material and supports the construction of a new interim storage facility at Julich for the spent AVR fuel. A transport to the U.S. would entail a transnational shipment to a German seaport, crossing further German states, which probability of realization JEN considers very low, as long as no other assessment of priority is made by the ministries involved.

The previously mentioned reasons have now led to the fact that JEN is bound to terminate the US option. Please note that this is the JEN perspective, but it does not represent the perspective of the ministry (BMBF) and any matters in the framework of non-proliferation agreements.

Sincerely,